

RETAINING DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to a retaining device for retaining, packaging, and displaying an object having indicia for display.

2. Background Art

10 There are many ways of displaying objects having indicia placed thereon. Objects on which indicia may be placed include a list of numerous items such as garments, athletic equipment, vehicle bodies, drink containers, writing utensils, to name a few. For example, in advertising and marketing industries, it is popular to place indicia, e.g., corporate logos, on objects such as athletic garments and equipment. These objects are popular to collect, wear, and/or display. In
15 situations where indicia has been placed on a ball, e.g., a golf ball, others have been challenged in developing ways to display the ball. For example, it is relatively challenging to retain, package and/or display the ball, being arcuately shaped, on a planar surface such as a shelf.

20 Additionally, others have also been challenged in situations where there are several objects having indicia to be displayed in a limited area. For example, in situations where it is desired to display several golf balls having displayable indicia, others have been challenged in developing ways to retain and display the golf balls in a compact or stacked configuration.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25 Thus, it is an object of the present invention to provide a retaining, packaging, and/or displaying device for an object having indicia to be displayed.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a retaining device for objects, such as golf balls, having indicia to be displayed on a planar surface.

5 It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a retaining device in a stacked or compact manner.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a retaining device to retain and display an object having indicia for display. The retaining device comprises first and second side walls spaced opposite each other, wherein each side wall has opposite ends. The retaining device further comprises first and second retaining walls connecting the side walls together. Each retaining wall is connected to one end of each side wall to space apart the retaining walls opposite each other to form an inner space. Each retaining wall has outer and inner surfaces. The inner surface of the first retaining wall has an aperture therethrough and a first lip extending from the inner surface toward the inner space to contact the object when retained within the inner space.

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It is another object of the present invention to provide a retaining strip to be folded to form a retaining device for retaining and displaying an object having indicia for display. The retaining strip comprises a first retaining wall having a free edge and a first hinged edge. The free edge has a slot. The first retaining wall has inner and outer surfaces. The inner surface has an aperture therethrough and a first lip extending therefrom. The retaining strip further comprises an integral side wall having opposite first and second ends, wherein the first end is integrally connected to the first hinged edge to define a first living hinge. The retaining strip further comprises a second retaining wall having second and third hinged edges. The second hinged edge is integrally connected to the second end of the first side wall to define a second living hinge. The retaining strip further comprises a ridged side wall having third and fourth ends, wherein the third end is integrally connected to the third hinged edge of the second retaining wall to define a third living hinge. The fourth end has a protrusion receivable in the slot of the free edge to define the retaining device.

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In another embodiment, the retaining device comprises first and second side walls spaced opposite each other, wherein each side wall has opposite ends. The first and second side walls are disposed in substantially parallel relationship. Each retaining wall is connected to one end of each side wall to space
5 apart the retaining walls opposite each other forming an inner space. Each retaining wall has outer and inner surfaces, wherein the inner surfaces of the first and second retaining walls have apertures therethrough and first and second lips, respectively. The first and second lips extend from each respective inner surface toward the inner space to contact the object for retainment thereof.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a top view of a retaining strip to be folded to form a retaining device in accordance with the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a side view of the retaining strip in Figure 1;

FIGURE 3 is a perspective view of the retaining device to retain an
15 object having indicia for display in accordance with the present invention;

FIGURE 4 is a top partial view of another embodiment of the retaining strip;

FIGURE 5 is a side view of the retaining strip in Figure 4;

FIGURE 6 is a cross-sectional view of the retaining strip in Figure
20 4 taken along lines 6-6;

FIGURE 7 is a top view of another embodiment of the retaining device;

FIGURE 8 is a top view of yet another embodiment of the retaining device in accordance with the present invention; and

FIGURE 9 is a top view of still another embodiment of the retaining device in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides a containing or retaining device
 5 having walls for an object having displayable indicia, wherein the object is held within the device by at least one ring or lip, and preferably by a pair of opposing rings or lips. Some of the walls have apertures therethrough so that the indicia may be displayed for viewing. The device comprises at least two walls, but may comprise more. Preferably, the device has two retaining walls and side walls.
 10 Thus, the present invention provides a retaining device is sufficient for packaging, retaining, and displaying such objects.

Sub a Figure 1 illustrates retaining strip 10 which is to be folded to form retaining device 11 (depicted in Figure 3) for retaining an object, such as a spherical object, having indicia for display. As shown in Figures 1-2, retaining strip 10
 15 includes first retaining wall 12 having free edge 14 and first hinged edge 16 opposite free edge 14. The walls are shown as essentially flat although they may be concave, convex, or otherwise shaped. Free edge 14 has at least slot 18 formed thereon. Preferably, there are two slots 18. First retaining wall 12 further has inner and outer surfaces 20, 22, wherein inner surface 20 has a set of first rings or lips 24
 20 extending therefrom. An aperture 26 is formed through the first retaining wall 12 creating an opening surrounded by the first lips 24. In this embodiment, there are three lips 24, although each device can comprise fewer or more lips.

In this embodiment, first retaining wall 12 has protrusion 21 and recesses 23 formed therealong. Protrusion 21 and recesses 23 are formed on first
 25 retaining wall 12 to facilitate stacking of other retaining devices having the same configuration as retaining device 11 as depicted in Figure 3. To facilitate in stacking a plurality of retaining devices, recesses 23 allow other protrusions of another retaining device to be inserted therein, and protrusions 21 may fit into other recesses of yet another retaining device. This connects the retaining devices

together and maintains sufficient stability and unity for displaying a plurality of objects having indicia.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, retaining strip 10 further includes first or integral side wall 28 having first and second ends 30, 32. First end 30 is integrally connected to first hinged edge 16 to define first living hinge 34. Retaining strip further comprises second retaining wall 36 having second and third hinged edges 38, 40. Second hinged edge 38 is integrally connected to second end 32 of integral side wall 28 to define second living hinge 42. As shown, second retaining wall 36 has inner and outer surfaces 37, 39. Inner surface 37 has a set of second rings or lips 41 which extend from inner surface 37. Second apertures 43 are formed through the inner surface 37 creating an opening surrounded by the second lips 41. As shown, apertures 26 and 43 have widths which are less than the diameter of the object.

As shown, retaining strip 10 further includes second or ridged side wall 44 having third and fourth ends 46, 48. Third end 46 is integrally connected to third hinged edge 40 of second retaining wall 36 to define a third living hinge 50. Fourth end 48 has a ridge 52 which is receivable in slot 18 of free edge 14. Figure 3 illustrates retaining device 11 when ridge 52 is received in slot 18.

Further, there may be protrusions 21 or recesses on sidewall 28 and/or sidewall 44 to allow the retaining devices to be stacked on its ends.

As depicted in Figure 3, protrusions 52 are received in recesses 18 so that integral and ridged side walls 28, 44 are disposed in substantially parallel relationship and so that fourth end 48 and living hinges 34, 42, 50 are at separate corners of retaining device 11.

As shown in Figure 3, retaining device 11 is configured to retain an object having indicia for display. For example, the object (not shown) may be a spherical object such as a golf ball having indicia printed thereon (not shown). Such indicia may include a variety of logos, marks, designs, or any other suitable indicia

for display. In this example, retaining device 11 may be configured to retain objects having the size of a golf ball such that the golf ball(s) may be retained therein, thereby allowing the indicia to be displayed through apertures 26 and 43. As shown, side walls 28, 44 are spaced opposite each other and substantially parallel each other. Retaining walls 12, 36 connect the side walls together, wherein each retaining wall is connected to one end of each side wall. Thus retaining walls 12, 36 are spaced apart opposite each other, thereby forming an inner space 54 as shown. The lips 24, 41 of the respective retaining walls 12, 36 are configured to extend from the respective inner surface sufficiently enough to contact the object.

In this embodiment, as the retaining device 11 is configured to retain an official size golf ball within inner space 54, side walls 28, 44 are configured to have a length about equal to the outside diameter of a standard size golf ball. As lips 24, 41 extend from each respective inner surface, the lips contact the object retained in inner space 54 and provides a biasing sufficient enough to hold the object therein and substantially limiting movement of the object. Thus, when the object is retained in the retaining device, the indicia of the object may be positioned through one of the apertures 26, 43 for display.

Although Figures 1-3 depict side walls 28, 44 and retaining walls 12, 36 being in substantially parallel relationship with each other, respectively, it is to be noted that parallel relationship between the side walls and the retaining walls is not necessary. Side and retaining wall in non-parallel relationship would not fall beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention. Moreover, although Figures 1-3 depict a plurality of lips and a plurality of apertures formed on both retaining walls 12, 36, it is to be noted that any number of lips and apertures may be formed on either or both retaining walls 12, 36 without falling beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention.

In this embodiment, Figures 1-3 depict retaining strip 10 and retaining device 11 having protrusions 21 and recesses 23 formed on first retaining wall 12. It is to be noted that protrusions 21 and recesses 23 may be configured to have any other suitable shape and in any other suitable manner which would not fall beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention. Moreover, protrusions 21 and

recesses 23 may be formed on any of the other walls without falling beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention. Thus, for example, second retaining wall 36 may have a single insert and a single notch formed thereon (not shown), if desired.

5 It is to be noted that the present invention may comprise additional wall(s), although only two retaining walls and two side walls are discussed.

Figure 4 depicts another retaining strip 110 in accordance with the present invention. Retaining strip 110 includes lip 124 having notches 125 formed thereon. In use, when lip 124 is in biasing contact with an object for which it is sized, notches 125 allow lip 124 to flex back toward its inner surface. This allows for compensation of different sized golf balls which typically vary between 1.68 to 1.72 inches in diameter. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, lip 124 includes contact numbers 127 which are configured to further allow flexing of lip 124 to accommodate slightly different sized golf balls.

15 *Sub a3* Figure 7 illustrates retaining device 211 which is yet another embodiment of the present invention. The embodiment of Figure 7 has similar members as the embodiment of Figures 1-3. For example, walls 12 and 36, lips 24 and 41, and apertures 26 and 43 of Figures 1-3 are similar to walls 212 and 236, lips 224 and 241, and apertures 226 and 243, respectively. However, as shown, side walls 228, 244 have a length which is less than the outside diameter of object 256.

25 *Sub a4* As shown in Figure 8, side walls 328 and 344 have a length less than the outside diameter of object 356. However, only retaining wall 312 includes lips 324 and apertures 326. Thus, in this embodiment, wall 336 does not display indicia of object 356. In this embodiment, remaining members of retaining device 211 may be similar to the members described in the embodiment of Figures 1-3.

Sub a5 In yet another embodiment of the present invention in Figure 9, retaining device 411 includes side walls 428 and 444 which do not have equal

lengths. As shown, both side walls 428, 444 have lengths less than the outside diameter of object 456. However, the length of side wall 428 is less than the length of side wall 444. As a result, an incline is created on retaining wall 412 when in use. In this embodiment, objects such as golf balls may be placed in device 411 sufficiently to have the object's indicia visible on an incline rather than orthogonally with respect to retaining wall 412. In situations where device 411 is placed slightly below eye level of a viewer or within a lateral view with respect to the viewer, the incline allows the indicia of objects 456 to be more easily visible. It is to be noted that other lengths and sizes of the retaining strip and the retaining device may be varied and would not fall beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention. Thus, the lengths of the side walls may be greater or less or substantially equal to the size of the object to be retained in the retaining device without falling beyond the scope or spirit of the present invention.

The retaining device may be manufactured differently than described above. For example, the retaining device may be injection molded as a completed box as a two-part box that is connected together, or otherwise and thus not have any living hinges. Additionally, the retaining device may be extruded and punched to create the necessary apertures and lips.

While embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described, it is not intended that these embodiments illustrate and describe all possible forms of the invention. Rather, the words used in the specification are words of description rather than limitation, and it is understood that various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.